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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 001680

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: MAY 11 IRAQ EXECUTIVE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

REF: BAGHDAD 01582

Classified By: Timothy M. Carney, Coordinator for Economic Transition i
n Iraq for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: On May 18 Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki chaired the weekly Iraq-Executive Steering Committee (I-ESC) meeting to discuss progress of supporting committees and their achievements over the last week in implementing Fardh Al-Qanoon (FAQ) initiatives and requirements. This week's meeting focused on detainee issues and procedures, stages of completion of Services Committee related requirements, a report of progress from the Popular Mobilization Committee, and an update from the Media Committee on actions completed over the last week. The Economic and Political Committees were not represented by their respective leadership, and their issues were consequently not discussed in detail. End Summary.

I-ESC Pre-Meeting

¶2. (C) Prior to the I-ESC, the National Security Advisor, Dr. Mouffawk Al Rubaie hosted a pre-meeting with MNF-I, USM-I and the Baghdad Operations Commander (BOC), General Abboud, to review important topics to be discussed during the I-ESC. At this pre-meeting, Coalition/US officials provided three primary recommendations for the NSA to consider. First, the Media Committee should appoint a civilian GoI spokesperson to focus on effectively promoting the non-kinetic aspects of FAQ. Second, the NSA should continue to reinforce the importance of budget execution and use the I-ESC as another way of measuring progress in this area. Third, the GoI should actively consider and decide on a near-term and longer-term solution to providing fuel to Mussaib and Qudus to optimize the short-term generation of electricity in Baghdad. Dr. Rubaie was receptive to all three recommendations and is committed to determining ways to move forward.

Detainee Issues:

¶3. (C) The PM launched the I-ESC session with the head of the Supreme Judicial Council, Judge Medhat. He provided a detailed update on detainee issues as a follow up to last week's I-ESC (reftel). Several members of the I-ESC voiced the overall concern that the current process is characterized by delays, inadequate procedures, overcrowding, and a lack of transparency that degrades confidence of the Iraqi people. During the meeting, the Minister of Human Rights indicated her ministry led a committee that surveyed prisons and found that many cases were being delayed an excessive amount of time. Judge Medhat said that the Judiciary has promised to address the detainee situation in line with FAQ. Judge Medhat highlighted the current process for completing investigations as well as new procedures that are being

implemented to expedite the process including the first ever implementation of five mobile court systems that travel to detainees instead of vice versa. At the conclusion of his discussion and presentation, Judge Medhat provided the following recommendations:

- Inform investigative offices that they need to receive cases from the five criminal courts and complete processing to prevent delays.
- Increase the number of investigators to complete investigations.
- Increase the qualifications and training of investigators.
- Reinforce the need of detention centers to present detainees to courts on the required days.
- Establish a high-level committee to coordinate investigative procedures and remove hindrances. This committee would include the Judicial Council and the ministries of Defense, Interior, Justice, and Human Rights.

Economic Committee:

¶4. (C) DPM Barham Salih was not present for the I-ESC meeting. However, one of his colleagues distributed an update on 2007 budget execution provided by the Ministry of Planning, Development, and Coordination.

Security and Services Committees:

¶5. (C) General Abboud, BOC Commander, indicated that services continue in most areas of Baghdad and the Amanat is

BAGHDAD 00001680 002 OF 003

supporting and cooperating. Activities within Baghdad include securing markets, refurbishing schools, improving sewer and water, and pursuing electricity projects.

¶6. (C) General Abboud urged activation of the currently contemplated program to provide displaced families with one million dinars as they return to their homes. The Governor of Baghdad said that he has discussed this program with the Minister of Finance who has agreed to provide the required funding. The Governor replied that they have the mechanisms in place to disburse the funds to displaced families, but that the MoF has not yet released the funds into his account. General Abboud indicated the mechanisms required to receive funds are complex and lengthy. He indicated he is aware of 3,000 families that should be compensated immediately and avoid the "red tape" of the current process.

¶7. (C) DPM Zoubai provided an update on several services related requirements. He mentioned that the services committee is working on removing concrete barriers erected by political parties, but that they would like assistance from MNF-I on providing security to the Amanat to do so. He mentioned that there has been improvement in the area of opening gas stations, but that the primary problem in this area is access to fuel. He also reinforced the need to improve drinking water in Al Madaain.

¶8. (C) DPM Zoubai also provided a detailed update on progress related to the reconstruction of Sarafiya bridge and Mutanabi Street that have both been damaged due to recent attacks. Zoubai indicated the Sarafiya bridge reconstruction is proceeding well and that it should be completed in six months. Additionally, MNF-I is assisting with putting up a temporary pontoon bridge to ease the flow of traffic during reconstruction. Regarding Mutanabi Street, Zoubai also indicated progress with this reconstruction project. During the discussion, the Mayor of Baghdad indicated the Mutanabi project was proceeding too slowly. He voiced disagreement as to whether or not the new street should have a covered roof. He believes it should not have a roof, which would be more in

keeping with historical tradition. He cited lack of an Executive Authority for the project as contributing to delay. Decisions need to be made quickly in order for the project to be completed within the goal of 60 days.

¶9. (C) The Mayor of Baghdad said that he has recently completed 88 projects in the areas of lighting, water and electricity.

¶10. (C) The Ministry of Health, represented by Dr. Adel discussed the recent fire in MoH pharmaceutical warehouses due to mortar attacks and the plan to transport medicines to other warehouses as an initial solution. He stressed the need to work with General Abboud and others to obtain the necessary amount of trucks and related security to facilitate this movement. He also indicated a need to work with MoD to determine a longer term solution to protecting MoH facilities.

Popular Mobilization Committee:

¶11. (C) Dr. Ahmed Chalibi, head of the Popular Mobilization Committee, focused on displaced families and reinforced the need to solve the detainee problem. Regarding displaced families, Dr. Chalibi indicated that efforts to return these individuals should focus on the areas, which include Haifa Street, Hurriyah, and one other neighborhood. Dr. Chalibi also indicated he is currently planning a conference of supportive popular mobilization committees and includes all Baghdad mulhallas. He expects approximately 800 participants and requested support from the NSA and other ministry officials.

Media Committee:

¶12. (C) Yaseen Majeed, head of the Media Committee, gave a brief overview of recent media activities. Majeed indicated that there have been three recent significant events including the bombings in Irbil, violence in other provinces, and recent attacks into the green zone. He voiced frustration that over the last week, there was "nothing to give the media." Comment: It is widely regarded that the Media Committee is ineffective in accomplishing its goals and objectives. Yaseen Majeed provides a high level overview, but there is rarely substance to his actions or activities. Post and MNF-I continue to look for ways to improve this committee. End Comment.

PM Comments:

BAGHDAD 00001680 003 OF 003

13 (C) During the meeting, the PM made a few comments related to the overall situation in Iraq. The PM discussed the complexity of the current situation from a political, economic, and organizational standpoint. He indicated "our soldiers are not ready for this type of operation." He reinforced the need to talk about hope and realizes the GoI is not going to be able to solve all issues. Specific to human rights, he said that Iraq is in an emergency situation, mentioned "we are not going to be able to do it 100%," and noted "obstacles" in health, electricity and oil that must be addressed.
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